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SUBJECT: CFE/JCG: 2010 WINTER OPENING-OF-ROUND, JAN 19 -
U.S. LAYS DOWN MARKER

REF: STATE 4441

(U) Summary. The opening of round plenary for the winter session of the Joint Consultative Group (JCG) was brief. The United States underscored the importance of the CFE Treaty, called on Russia to resume compliance, and looked to 2010 with renewed hope, a sentiment echoed by several Allies and partner states around the table. The U.S. also met informally with Azerbaijan to express concern over Azerbaijan's overages in holdings, and with Russia to note U.S. interest in Russia providing more details, in the spirit of transparency, of its recent force restructuring. End summary.

(U) The winter session of the JCG opened on January 19 with Georgia (Giorgadze) in the chair. The United States (Neighbour) delivered an opening statement reaffirming the U.S. commitment to work cooperatively with all parties to resolve the continued CFE impasse (text reftel). The U.S. called on Russia to return to compliance, stated that continued noncompliance could make it difficult to provide information to Russia in upcoming data exchanges, and that we look to 2010 with renewed hope. Russia was not represented by its Chief or Deputy Arms Control Delegate, but by Vadim Solomenko, and did not reply.

(U) The UK, Romania, and Georgia avowed their support for CFE and noted the importance of making progress in the coming year. Kazakhstan (Tulakbeyev) also highlighted the importance of resolving the CFE impasse, arguing that the best way to achieve success was for the JCG to take the lead on CFE negotiations.

(SBU) Following the meeting, U.S. del met informally with Azerbaijan (Guliyev and Imamaliyev), to express U.S. concerns regarding Azerbaijan's 2009 CFE data, which reported overages in holdings of artillery and tanks (per instructions reftel). Azerbaijan responded that the excess was in fact a national security imperative and partly in response to vast unreported Armenian TLE holdings.

(SBU) The U.S. (Neighbour) also bilaterally approached the Russian delegation (Solomenko) regarding U.S. interest in Russia providing more details, in the spirit of transparency, on results of its recent armed forces restructuring and forces in the flank. Solomenko was politely non-committal. Neighbour followed up with Russian del head Ulyanov on January 21. Ulyanov observed that the U.S. was not the first delegation to make such a request, although it was the first time he had heard it to specify also forces in the flank. Ulyanov undertook to convey this Moscow, but cautioned that, even in the event of a positive response, it probably would

be "months" before Russia actually provided details to its partners.

(U) The next JCG plenary will be held on January 26, under UK chairmanship.

FULLER